

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for controlling rendering of digital content comprising:
providing a computer architecture including a repository adapted to store digital content and usage rights information associated with the digital content, the usage rights specifying a manner by which the digital content can be rendered, said repository being adapted to receive requests for stored digital content from a requester and, transmit requested digital content and the associated usage rights information to the requester in response to the request.
providing a rights enforcement mechanism for enforcing rendering of the digital content in accordance with the usage rights information, whereby the requested digital content cannot be rendered by the requester in the absence of the rights enforcement architecture and whereby the rights enforcement mechanism enforces rendering of the requested digital content by the requester in accordance with the usage rights information.
2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of providing a computer architecture comprises providing a computer architecture to a first party and the step of providing a rights enforcement mechanism comprises providing a rights enforcement mechanism to a second party that is distinct from the first party.
3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the repository includes a storage medium for storing the usage rights information and the digital content.
4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the repository includes a first storage medium for storing the usage rights information and a second storage medium for storing the digital content.
5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the usage rights information includes conditions that must be satisfied in order to permit rendering of the digital content.
6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the usage rights information includes fee information.

7. The method according to claim 1, wherein the usage rights information specifies circumstances under which the digital content can be rendered.

8. A method for controlling the rendering of digital contents comprising:
storing digital content and usage rights information associated with the digital content in a repository, said usage rights information specifying a manner by which the digital content can be rendered;

receiving requests for stored digital content and, in response thereto, causing a requested digital content and the associated usage rights information to be transmitted to the requester over a communications medium; and

enforcing usage of the digital content in accordance with the usage rights information, whereby the requested digital content cannot be rendered by the requester in the absence of a rights enforcement architecture and whereby rendering of the requested digital content by the requester is only in accordance with the usage rights information.

9. The method according to claim 8, wherein said storing step comprises storing the usage rights information on the same storage medium as the digital content.

10. The method according to claim 8, wherein said storing step comprises storing the usage rights information on a storage medium separate from a storage medium on which the digital content is stored.

11. The method according to claim 8, wherein the usage rights information includes conditions that must be satisfied in order to permit rendering of the digital content.

12. The method according to claim 8, wherein the usage rights information includes fee information.

13. The method according to claim 8, wherein the usage rights information specifies circumstances under which the digital content can be rendered.

14. The method according to claim 11, wherein the conditions include a fee to be collected in connection with the rendering of the digital content.

15. A computer-readable medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions for controlling rendering of digital content, the instructions comprising:

instructions for storing encrypted digital content in a repository;

instructions for associating with the digital content usage rights information specifying a manner by which the digital content can be rendered;

instructions for receiving a request from a requester for the digital content; and

instructions for causing the requested digital content and the usage rights information to be transmitted from the repository to the requester in response to the request for the digital content.

16. The computer readable medium of claim 15, further comprising instructions for enforcing rendering of the digital content in accordance with the usage rights information, whereby the requested digital content cannot be rendered by the requester in the absence of a rights enforcement architecture and whereby rendering of the requested digital content by the requester is only in accordance with the usage rights information.

17. The computer-readable medium of claim 15, wherein the usage rights information specifies a condition that must be satisfied in order for the requester to render the digital content.

18. The computer-readable medium of claim 17, wherein the condition includes a fee to be collected in connection with the rendering of the digital content.

19. A method of rendering digital content having usage rights information associated therewith, the usage rights information specifying a manner by which the digital content can be rendered, the method comprising:

receiving a request to render the digital content;

determining, based on the usage rights information, whether the content can be rendered in accordance with the request; and

rendering the digital content in accordance with the request only if it is determined that the content can be rendered in accordance with the request.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the usage rights information is stored on the same storage medium as the digital content.

21. The method of claim 19, wherein the usage rights information is stored on a storage medium that is separate from a storage medium on which the digital content is stored.

22. The method of claim 19, further comprising:
determining based on the usage rights information a fee to be collected in connection with rendering the digital content; and
collecting the fee prior to said rendering step.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein said step of collecting the fee comprises creating a debit against a user account.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein said step of collecting the fee further comprises reporting the debit to a clearinghouse.

25. The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of obtaining credit information relating to a user from a credit agency prior to collecting the fee.

26. A method of rendering digital content having usage rights information associated therewith, the usage rights information indicating how the digital content can be rendered, the method comprising:

receiving a request to render the digital content;
determining, based on the usage rights information, whether the digital content can be rendered in accordance with the request; and
denying the request and preventing rendering of the digital content if it is determined that the digital content cannot be rendered in accordance with the request.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein the usage rights information is stored on the same storage medium as the digital content.

28. The method of claim 26, wherein the usage rights information is stored on a storage medium that is separate from a storage medium on which the digital content is stored.

29. The method of claim 26, further comprising:
determining based on the usage rights information a fee to be collected in connection with rendering the digital content; and
collecting the fee prior to said rendering step.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein said step of collecting comprises creating a debit against a user account.

31. The method of claim 29, wherein said step of collecting further comprises reporting the debit to a clearinghouse.

32. The method of claim 29, further comprising the step of obtaining credit information relating to the user from a credit agency prior to collecting the monetary value.

33. The method of claim 26, wherein the usage rights information specifies a fee to be collected as a condition to rendering the digital content, and wherein said denying step is based at least in part on non-payment of the monetary amount as determined in said determining step.

34. A computer-readable medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions for rendering digital content having usage rights information associated therewith and specifying how the digital content can be rendered, the medium comprising:
instructions for receiving a request to render the digital content;
instructions for determining, based on the usage rights information, whether the digital content can be rendered in accordance with the request; and

instructions for denying the request if the usage rights information does not indicate that the digital content can be rendered in accordance with the request.

35. The computer-readable medium of claim 34, further comprising instructions for approving the request and rendering the digital content if the usage rights information indicates that the digital content can be rendered in accordance with the request.

36. The computer-readable medium of claim 35, further comprising:
instructions for determining, based on the usage rights information, a fee to be collected in connection with rendering the digital content; and
instructions for collecting the fee.

37. A system for controlling rendering of digital content having usage rights information associated therewith, said system comprising:
a rendering system which issues a request to render the digital content; and
a rights repository which receives the request to render the digital content, examines the usage rights information associated with the digital content, and grants or denies the request to render the digital content based on whether the rights information permits rendering of the digital content in accordance with the request.

38. The system of claim 37, wherein the usage rights information includes a condition and wherein the rights repository grants or denies the request based at least in part on whether the condition is satisfied.

39. The system of claim 38, wherein the condition comprises a requirement that a fee be collected prior to rendering the digital content, and wherein the rights repository ensures that payment has been collected prior to granting a request to render the digital content.